

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 156698 TOSEC 050104

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEL AVIV 4197 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
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QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4197

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S VIEWS ON AN
OVERALL SETTLEMENT

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER RABIN IN JUNE 20 MAARIV
INTERVIEW REVEALED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED IN DETAIL
HIS VIEWS ON OVERALL SETTLEMENT WITH PRESIDENT FORD.
THESE VIEWS ARE ESSENTIALLY RESTATEMENT OF LABOR
PARTY 1969 "ORAL TORAH", MODIFIED BY PROPOSAL FOR
INTERWEAVING CERTAIN SOVEREIGNTY CHANGES WITH LONG-
TERM IDF PRESENCE IN SINAI AND GOLAN HEIGHTS.
ALTHOUGH INTERVIEW DOES NOT CONSTITUTE STATEMENT
OF OFFICIAL POLICY, MOST OBSERVERS HERE BELIEVE THAT
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THESE VIEWS PROBABLY WOULD BE GOI POSITION RE OVER-
ALL SETTLEMENT. ISRAELI HARDLINERS IN ANY EVENT
WILL BE CERTAIN TO TRY TO HOLD RABIN TO THESE
POSITIONS IF AND WHEN NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN OVERALL

SETTLEMENT GET UNDER WAY. RABIN INTERVIEW, ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN WIDELY INTERPRETED HERE AS MODERATE AND FLEXIBLE, UNDERSCORES CONTINUING DEEP GAP BETWEEN ISRAELI VIEWS AND PUBLICLY ARTICULATED DEMANDS OF ARAB STATES RE TERMS OF OVERALL SETTLEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. PRIME MINISTER RABIN TOLD HIS INTERVIEWER THAT DURING DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT FORD HE DISCUSSED ISRAEL'S NEEDS AND CONCEPTS CONCERNING DEFENSIBLE PEACE AND SECURE BORDERS, AND THAT HIS PRESENTATION INCLUDED THE USE OF MAPS. RABIN THEN SUMMARIZED FOR INTERVIEWER FOLLOWING POINTS REGARDING AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT.

2. ISRAEL MUST MAINTAIN A PRESENCE AND CONTROL IN SHARM EL SHEIKH AS WELL AS TERRITORIAL CONTINUITY BETWEEN SHARM EL-SHEIKH AND ISRAEL PROPER. INTERNATIONAL FRONTIER BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT WOULD HAVE TO BE CHANGED, ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT IMPERATIVE THAT ALL THESE CHANGES CONSTITUTE A CHANGE OF SOVEREIGNTY BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT. CHANGES OF SOVEREIGNTY COULD BE INTERWOVEN WITH IDF DEPLOYMENT FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME. RABIN ADDED THAT, EXCEPT FOR SHARM EL-SHEIKH HE DID NOT GO INTO DETAILS AS TO FINAL ARRANGEMENTS IN SINAI. (NOTE: IT IS WIDELY ASSUMED THAT RABIN'S OFF-REPEATED REFERENCE TO ADJUSTMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY REFERS TO APPROACHES TO RAFAH JUNCTION, ALTHOUGH HE HAS AVOIDED SAYING SO EXPLICITLY. HE HAS SAID, HOWEVER, IN CONTEXT OF CONTROVERSY OVER ILLEGAL SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN SEBASTIA (SUMMER, 1974), THAT AS REGARDS GOI POLICY ON SETTLEMENTS HE WOULD GIVE PREFERENCE TO GOLAN HEIGHTS, JORDAN RIVER VALLEY AND RAFAH.)

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3. ISRAEL WOULD NOT BE ABLE, EVEN IN FINAL SETTLEMENT, TO COME DOWN FROM GOLAN HEIGHTS, ALTHOUGH IDF'S PRESENT LINE WAS NOT NECESSARILY THE FINAL ONE. INTERWEAVING OF SOVEREIGNTY CHANGES WITH IDF DEPLOYMENT COULD ALSO APPLY TO GOLAN HEIGHTS.

4. AS TO FINAL BORDER WITH JORDAN, THERE WAS NO GOI DECISION BUT ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS HAD DISCUSSED VARIOUS PLANS SINCE 1967, INCLUDING ALLON PLAN AND PROPOSAL FOR JORDAN-ISRAEL FEDERATION ON WEST BANK WITH UNITED JERUSALEM AS ISRAEL'S CAPITAL. RABIN NOTED TO PRESIDENT THAT THESE IDEAS, INVOLVING ISRAELI SECURITY RULE ON WEST BANK,

OPEN BORDER BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL, AND RIGHT OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN WEST BANK, HAD BEEN SUMMARILY REJECTED BY JORDAN. RABIN ALSO NOTED THAT HE HAD REFERRED IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT FORD TO KING HUSSEIN'S PLAN FOR JORDANIAN-WEST BANK FEDERATION WITH ITS CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION IN AMMAN.

5. AFTER OBSERVING THAT PRESIDENT FORD ONLY LISTENED TO HIS PRESENTATION WITHOUT REACTING TO THE VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS, RABIN TOLD INTERVIEWER " I SUPPOSE THESE IDEAS AR NOT MUCH FAVORED BY THE US ADMINISTRATION." END UNCLASSIFIED.

6. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THIS IS FIRST TIME THAT ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER HAS PUBLICLY ADMITTED DISCUSSING OVERALL CONCEPT OF FINAL BORDERS IN SUCH DETAIL WITH USG, ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN PRESS REPORTS THAT MRS. MEIR HAD DISCUSSED VARIOUS ASPECTS SUCH AS SHARM EL-SHEIKH AND WEST BANK WITH PRESIDENT NIXON. IT IS ALSO FIRST TIME THAT RABIN HAS PRESENTED THESE CONCEPTS IN PACKAGE FORM TO ISRAELI PUBLIC, ALTHOUGH HE HAS PUBLICLY DISCUSSED THEM SEPARATELY ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS.

7. RABIN INTERVIEW DOES NOT REPEAT NOT CONSTITUTE OFFICIAL GOI POLICY (WHICH IS EMBODIED IN OFFICIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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CABINET DECISIONS AND/OR MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS PRESENTED TO AN APPROVED BY KNESSET). BUT WIDELY HELD ASSUMPTION HERE IS THAT ELEMENTS OUTLINED BY RABIN IN HIS INTERVIEW IN ALL LIKELIHOOD WOULD BE ISRAELI POSITION IN NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT. RABIN'S VIEWS IN THIS RESPECT ARE VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL WITH THOSE OF LABOR PARTY'S 1969 " ORAL TORAH" TO WHICH DEFMIN PERES AND LABOR PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL ZARMI REFERRED IN LATE JUNE. (T.A. 3908) THUS RABIN NOW HAS PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH WHAT HAS BEEN AND APPARENTLY REMAINS POSITION OF RULING LABOR PARTY ON OVERALL SETTLEMENT (DESPITE EFFORT OF SOME MODERATE ELEMENTS IMMEDIATELY AFTER OCTOBER WAR TO PUSH IT TO POSITION OF GREATER FLEXIBILITY). AS WE NOTED IN TA 3598 EVEN THE MAPAM/ILP "DOVES" AS OF NOW ARE NOT SO FAR AWAY FROM THIS POSITION.

8. WE BELIEVE THAT RABIN'S MAIN PRUPOSE IN MAKING THESE STATEMENTS AT THIS TIME IS TO PUT ON THE RECORD HIS VIEW ON WHAT OUT TO BE ISRAELI POSITION IN CASE OVERALL SETTLEMENT ISSUE BECOMES ACTIVE IN NEAR FUTURE--PARTICULARLY IF

NEGOTIATIONS FOR INTERIM GOE-GOI SETTLEMENT COLLAPSES.
HIS PRIMARY AUDIENCE IS ISRAELI PUBLIC, WHICH NOW
HAS CLEAR IDEA OF WHERE HE STANDS ON NUMBER OF
CRITICAL NEGOTIATING ISSUES. SOME COMMENTATORS
BELIEVE THAT RABIN ALSO WANTED TO LAUNCH TRIAL
BALLON TO DETERMINE WHETHER ANY SIGNIFICANT OPPOS-
ITION TO THESE VIEWS EXIST WITHIN CABINET.

9. HOWEVER INTERVIEW MAY BE RECEIVED OUTSIDE
ISRAEL, DOMINANT INTERPRETATION HERE IS THAT
RABIN'S BIEWS CONSTITUTE MODERATE AND CONCILIA-
TORY APPROACH. FROM THE ISRELI PERSPECTIVE,
EMPHASIS IS NOT ON WHAT ISRAEL INSISTS ON RETAINING
BUT RATHER ON WHAT IS SEEN AS FLEXIBILITY AND
GENEROSITY REGARDING THAT PART OF OCCUPIED TERRITORY
WHICH IT IS PREPARED TO GIVE BACK. IN ADDITION,
RABIN'S FORMULATION RE INTERWEAVING ELEMENTS OF
SOVEREIGNTY CHANGE AND IDF PRESENCE IN SINAI AND
GOLAN HEIGHTS IS INTERPRETED HERE AS SERIOUS SEARCH
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FOR PRAGMATIC SOLUTION. IT IS STRIKING THAT MOST
CRITICISM SO FAR IS FROM RIGHT WING PRESS, CON-
CERNED THAT PRIME MINISTER UNNECESSARILY HAS
GIVEN UP TACTICAL ADVANTAGE BY REVEALING HIS
HAND, AND THAT ARAB STATES WILL SEE HIS STATEMENTS
AS OPENING POSITION ON WHICH TO HASE THEIR DEMANDS
FOR FURTHER CONCESSIONS--BACK TO 1967 BORDERS.

10. INTERVIEW UNDERSCORES PERSISTENCE
OF DEEP GAP BETWEEN ISRAELI VIEWS AND PUBLICLY
ARTICULATED DEMANDS OF ARAB STATES AS REGARDS
BASIS FOR AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT. IN FACT,
OVERALL SETTLEMENT WOULD APPEAR VIRTUALLY UNATTAINABLE
ON TERMS PRESENTED BY RABIN. MANY ISRAELIS THEMSELVES
DOUBTLESS HAVE COME TO SAME CONCLUSION AND WE
CAN ANTICIPATE THAT ISRAELI HARDLINERS WILL REMIND
RABIN OF THIS INTERVIEW IF AND WHEN NEGOTIATIONS
FOR OVERALL SETTLEMENT GET UNDERWAY. END CONFIDENTIAL.
VELIOTES UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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